

REMARKS

Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided and for the allowance of claims 1-5 and 29. Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 6-12 and 30-31 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1-5 and 29 will remain pending in the present application.

The Examiner has rejected claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Without agreeing to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, Applicants have canceled claim 31 without prejudice or disclaimer. It is thus respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

The Examiner has rejected claims 6-12 and 30-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,916,192 to NITA, finding that this reference teaches all limitations of these claims. As discussed above and solely in order to advance the prosecution of the present application as discussed above, Applicants have canceled rejected claims 6-12 and 30-31, which should not be taken as an acquiescence by Applicants as to the appropriateness of the rejection. Further, Applicants expressly reserve the right to submit claims of a related scope in another application. Thus, the cancellation of the claims in the present application is without prejudice.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending claim of the present application meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 112, and respectfully request the Examiner to indicate the allowance of each and every pending claim in the present application.

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR THE INDICATION OF ALLOWABLE  
SUBJECT MATTER

In response to the Statement of Reasons for the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter, mailed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on March 24, 2004, along with the above-noted Official Action, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for patentability of the allowed claims in the present application. In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indications that certain identified features are not disclosed by the prior art references, as noted by the Examiner, Applicants further wish to clarify that each of the independent claims in the present application recites a particular combination of features, and the basis for patentability of each of these claims is further based on the particular totality of the features recited therein. The dependent claims set forth additional basis for their patentability in accordance with their recited limitations as well as in accordance with the particular limitations of the respective base claims.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present amendment is in proper form and that none of the references either taken together or taken alone in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicants' invention. Accordingly, consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and are now believed to be appropriate.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,  
Satoshi KIDOOKA et al.

*Will. Boshnack*  
*Reg. No. 44,550*

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Bruce H. Bernstein  
Reg. No. 29,027

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GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.  
1950 Roland Clarke Place  
Reston, VA 20191  
(703) 716-1191